

Photo Finish

Q My fiancé and I can't wait to take lots of photos and videos on our honeymoon.

Will our film and tapes be safe going through the airport X-ray machine and magnetic door?

A No doubt about it, honeymoon memories are priceless. You'll cherish every photo of your great escape— that romantic shot of the two of you kissing under a waterfall or you and your new hubby standing in front of Big Ben. But to ensure that your pictures won't perish underneath an airport X-ray machine, the New York Institute of Photography—the world's largest photography school—offers the following tips: If your film has to go through three or more X-ray machines insist that loaded cameras and film be hand-inspected. One X-ray may be harmless, but the effects are cumulative, and too much radiation may compromise the quality of your film. Don't be at all embarrassed to ask—security personnel are required to oblige your request. As for the camera itself, the X-ray machine shouldn't harm it no matter how many times it's scanned through. Videotapes and camcorders are a whole different story. This sensitive equipment won't be harmed by X-rays, but will be damaged by those airport magnetic security doorways we all walk through. So, always ask that your video equipment be hand-inspected, or put it on the conveyor belt along with your carry-on luggage. That way the hilarious video of your spouse learning the hula will be in perfect condition when you screen it for all of his friends. Visit the New York Institute of Photography's Web site (nyiso.hio.ios.com) for more information.

Asia Advice

Q My fiancé and I are going to Southeast Asia for our honeymoon. Many people have told us we need visas as well as passports. Are they right?

A In short, it depends on where you go in Asia. Obviously you'll need a valid

passport for all Asian destinations, but as for an added visa, you should investigate each country's regulations, and then consider how long you'll be there. Some countries—Singapore, for example—allow you to stay without a visa for up to 30 days. In other countries—such as Malaysia—the visa-free stay can be up to three months. In these cases it should be fine to go



without getting a visa—unless you're taking an ultra-luxurious four-month honeymoon! However, it's a completely different story in Taiwan, where you can stay only 14 days without a visa. Even if you're not planning to visit that long, Taiwan has extremely strict regulations regarding extensions without a visa. So, just to be safe, obtain a visitor's visa before you leave home. There are 13 Taipei visa offices in the United States. Call the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Washington, DC (202-495-1814) to find the office near you. You'll need your passport, two recent photos, and your plane ticket. An added bonus: The whole process is absolutely free. Although you may never need your visa, the old saying "better safe than sorry" couldn't be truer when you're half way around the world.

Honeymoon.com

Q My fiancé and I just got hooked up to the Internet. We've heard about travel sites on the Web and would like to plan and book our honeymoon in cyber space. What kind of travel information is out there?

A An easier question to answer would be what travel information *isn't* on the Internet. Surfing the net to make travel arrangements is like having a travel agent literally at your fingertips. There are informational sites (where you can browse places to stay and things to do) and booking sites (which actually allow you to pay for flights and

reserve rooms on screen).

A word to the wise: Do not use your credit card on-line unless you're absolutely sure the site is "secure". Many sites now use a symbol—such as a lock—to confirm that the site is safe for credit card use. Microsoft's Expedia site (expedia.msn.com) lets you shop around for resorts, rental cars, and flight information by using the same database that travel agents use (it has over 25,000 hotels around the world). If you're only interested in airline information, you should definitely check out Friendly Skyline (ual.com), which is

sponsored by United Airlines but also posts competitors' fares. This site has a great feature called "fuzzy dates", which allows users to explore the least expensive flights for a specific location within a certain period of time. The American Association of Travel Agents—which has its own Web site, astanet.com—offers the following sites that you may not have thought about, but could prove helpful: The Weather Channel (weather.com), Language Translation (travlang.com/languages), Currency Conversion (olsen.ch/cgi-bin/exmnet), and Tourism Offices Directory (mbnet.mb.ca/lucas/travel/tourism-offices.html). And your honeymoon Web search would not be complete without checking out *Bridal Guide's* own Honeymoon Travel Web site (bridalguidemag.com), where you'll find loads of information for the most romantic getaway of your life.